








## #YourSayVA Digital Town Hall On Distracted Driving Response Assessment

The purpose of the online survey was to allow Virginians to share their thoughts on distracted driving and other unsafe driving behaviors with the Governor’s Executive Leadership Team on Highway Safety. Respondents totalled 2084 persons during December 2018. The survey consisted of eleven questions, five of which were open ended allowing respondents to provide unstructured feedback. Respondents were self-selecting in response to media events, solicitation of safety partners, local media messages, news releases, and online posted information about the distracted driving Digital Town Hall. They do not represent a random sample of Virginia residents. Part 1 evaluates information received from the first six structured questions and Part 2 looks at the five open-ended questions.

### PART 1: QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6

When asked to select the most serious risky behavior, 49.2% of respondents identified distracted driving, followed by 24.2% who identified drunk driving. 93.3% of all respondents indicated that distracted driving is a very serious or serious problem. When asked how often respondents used a phone while driving, 13.5% indicated frequent or moderate use. Only 21.7% stated they never use a phone while driving. 70.1% of respondents indicated that, as a passenger, they had asked a driver to put a phone away while driving. Table 1 summarizes this information while more detail is provided in the following sections. One thing to note is that over 50% of respondents ranked not wearing a seatbelt as the least serious behavior.

**Table 1. Summary of Survey Responses**

Survey Question	Percent of Total Respondents							
<b>Respondent Perceptions</b>								
Ranking of Risky Behaviors*	Highest	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest	Trend
Distracted Driving	49.2%	17.1%	14.1%	9.3%	5.1%	2.7%	2.6%	
Drunk Driving	24.2%	24.5%	18.4%	14.7%	10.4%	4.6%	3.2%	
Aggressive Driving	10.8%	19.3%	16.9%	17.8%	17.9%	11.4%	5.9%	
Not Wearing a Seatbelt	5.9%	4.9%	5.3%	6.3%	8.7%	18.2%	50.6%	
Speeding	4.7%	9.6%	12.7%	9.7%	14.5%	28.3%	20.5%	
Drugged Driving	3.2%	18.9%	20.6%	20.5%	18.4%	13.6%	4.8%	
Drowsy Driving	2.0%	5.8%	12.0%	21.7%	25.0%	21.3%	12.3%	
Seriousness of Distracted Driving	<b>Very Serious</b>	→		→		→		<b>Not Serious</b>
	80.4%	13.3%		4.9%		0.8%		0.6%
<b>Respondent Reported Actions</b>								
Phone Use Frequency as a Driver	<b>Never</b>	←		←		←		<b>Frequently</b>
	21.7%	44.2%		20.6%		5.7%		7.7%
Asked Driver to Stop Using Phone as a Passenger	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>						
	70.1%	29.9%						

\* Behaviors listed in order of being ranked as most serious

From the trends shown in the rankings of risky behaviors in table 1, *distracted* and *drunk driving* have consistently decreasing numbers of respondents who rank these behaviors lower indicating that these behaviors are critical in respondents’ minds. *Aggressive*, *drugged*, and, to a lesser extent, *drowsy driving* are not ranked either high or low but are ranked consistently in the middle rankings indicating that although they are not considered top priority, they are consistently identified as a problem. Conversely, *not wearing a seatbelt* has a consistently increasing number of respondents who rank this behavior lower, with *speeding* having a similar trend but some variability in the perception of respondents. This indicates that these are generally not considered a priority when considering risky driving behaviors.

### Demographics of Respondents (questions 1 and 2)

Respondents provided their age and gender but no additional personal information. As a result, no distinction could be made about geography associated with respondents' location of residence, driver's licensure, ethnicity or other demographics associated.

52.8% (1100) of the respondents were *male* and 47.2% (984) were *female*. Figure 1 shows the distribution by age group. The largest groups for both genders were respondents between the ages of 51 to 64 followed by respondents between the ages of 36 and 50. Women had a higher representation in age groups *Under 18*, 18 to 35 and 51 to 64 while men had a higher representation in age groups 36 to 50 and over 65.

The percentages given in the remainder of this assessment are with respect to the total number of males and females respectively and with respect to each age group and not to the total number of respondents.

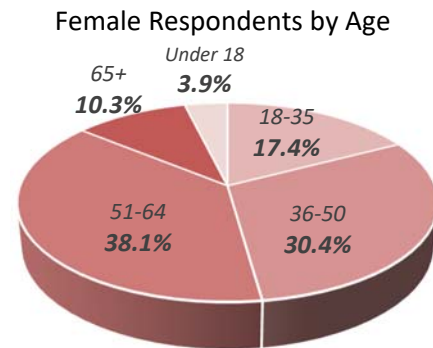
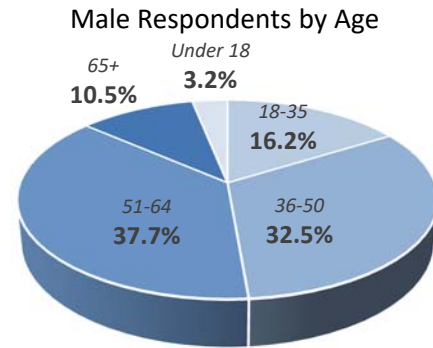


Figure 1. Age Distribution by Gender

### Ranking of Risky Behaviors (question 3)

Each respondent was asked to rank the seriousness of seven risky behaviors from 1 to 7 with 1 being the most serious.

Table 1 provided a summary of overall rankings. Figures 2 and 3 show rankings by age and gender for what respondents considered the most serious (figure 2) and least serious (figure 3) problems. Individual graphs are ordered by highest to lowest number of respondents for each ranking. Percentages are with respect to the total number of respondents in each age and gender. Respondents could not duplicate a ranking, i.e. rank two behaviors as most serious.

*Distracted driving* was ranked the most serious by all genders and age groups except men and women under 18. For both of these groups, their highest concern was *drunk driving*. For respondents between the ages of 18 and 35, *distracted* and *drunk driving* were only 5 percentage points apart while for all adults age 36 and over, *distracted driving* was ranked 30 or more points higher than any other behavior. For 18 and under men, *speeding* tied with *distracted driving* while for 18 and under women, *drugged driving* was the behavior that was of most concern after *alcohol* and above *distracted driving*. The next behavior after *distracted driving* that was ranked highest by women age 65 and older was *aggressive driving*.

Driving while *not wearing seatbelts (unbelted)* was uniformly ranked as the least serious problem across all ages for both men and women and by more than half the respondents for ages 36 and over. The next behavior that was ranked as least serious was *speeding* followed by *drowsy driving*. Less than 4% of respondents uniformly ranked *distracted driving* as the least serious with the single exception of women under 18.

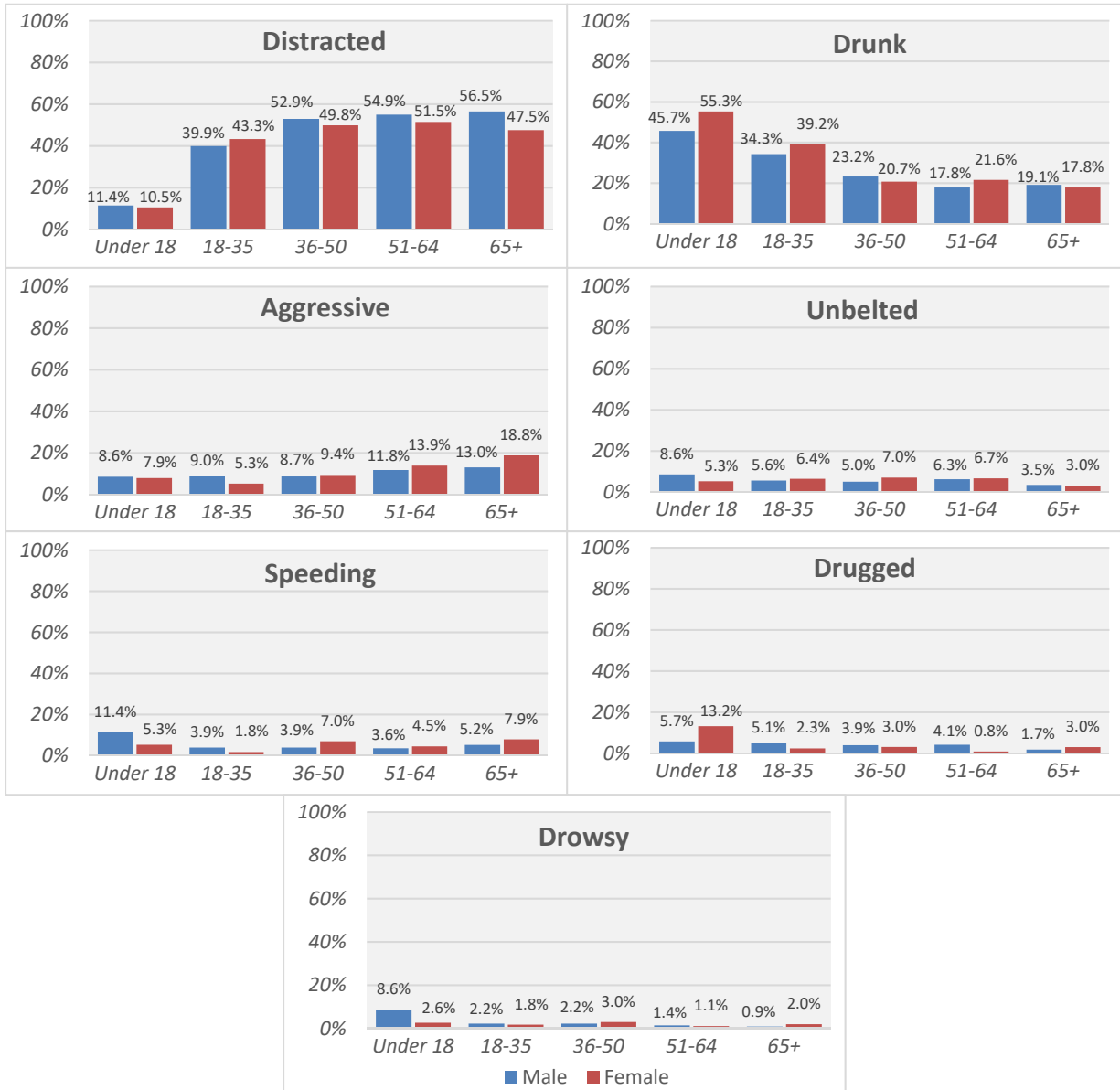


Figure 3. Respondent Ranked Most Serious Risky Behaviors by Age and Gender

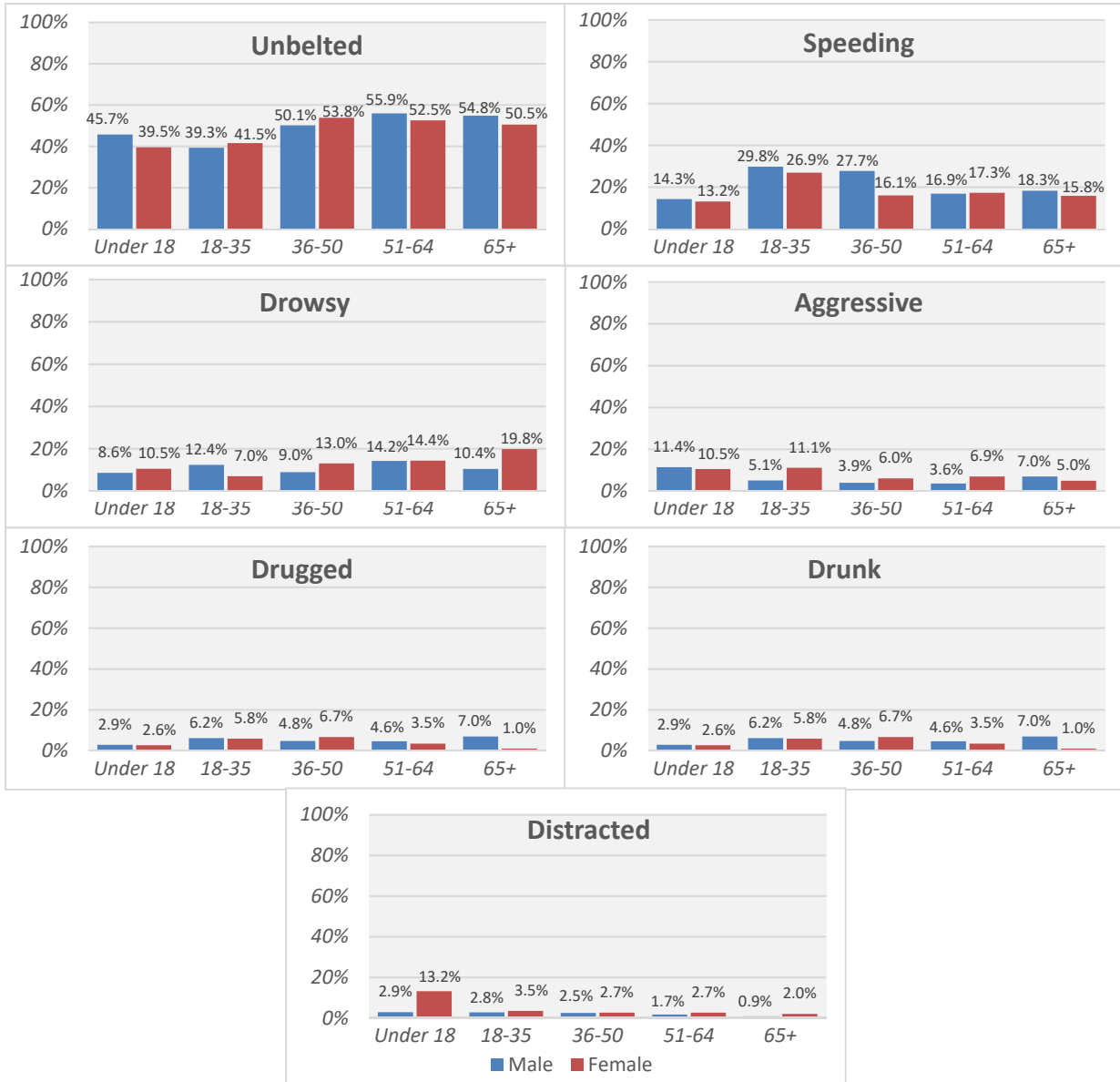
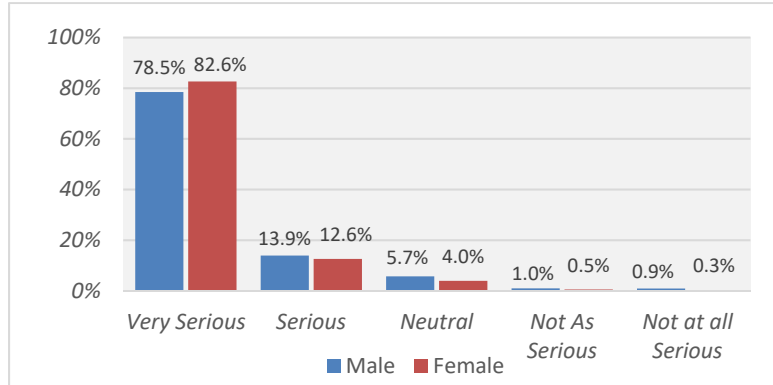


Figure 4. Respondent Ranked Least Serious Risky Behaviors by Age and Gender

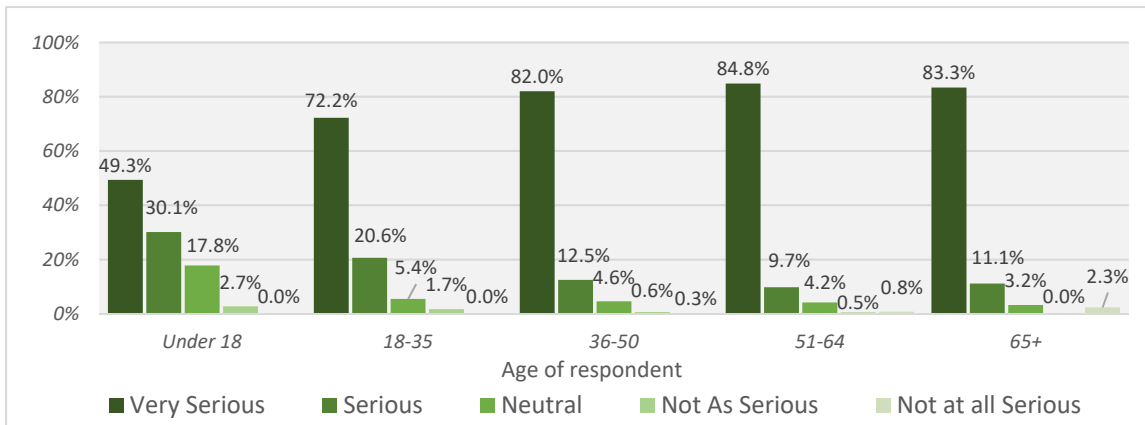
**Distracted Driving: How Serious a Problem is this Behavior (question 4)**

82.6% of women and 78.5% of men indicated that distracted driving is a very serious problem, a 4.1% difference. This shifts somewhat when very serious and serious are combined. Then 95.2% of men and 92.4% of women indicate it is serious or very serious, a 2.8% difference. Although less than 2% of respondents indicated that distracted driving is not a serious problem, twice the number of men as women indicated this. Figure 5 details responses by gender of respondent.

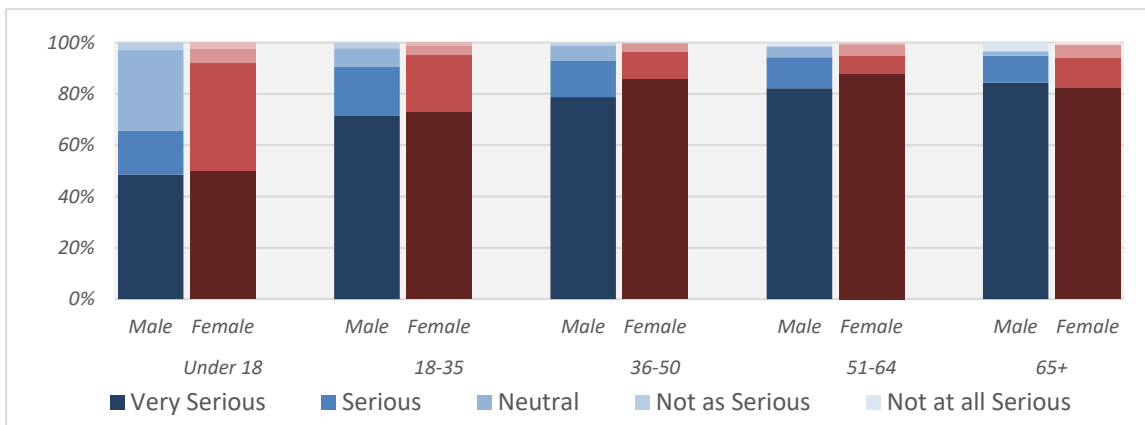


**Figure 5. Seriousness of Distracted Driving by Gender of Respondent**

In general, as their age increased, more respondents considered distracted driving to be a very serious problem. Worth noting, less than half of respondents under 18 selected the most serious option. Conversely, no one 35 and under considered it to be *not at all serious*, while 2.3% of respondents age 65 and older did. Figure 6 provides details by age group of respondent. This is expanded to consider both gender and age in Figure 7, which compares the percentage that each age group contributes to responses for that gender. Men in all age groups are more likely to consider distracted driving to be less serious than women except those 65 and older. This is particularly true for men under 18.



**Figure 6. Seriousness of Distracted Driving by Age Group of Respondents**

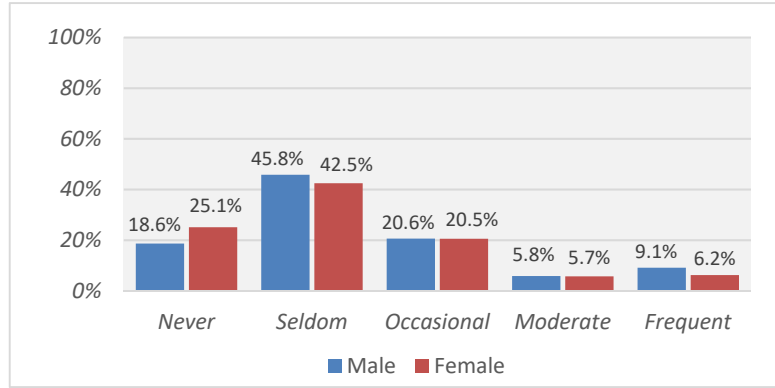


**Figure 7. Seriousness of Distracted Driving by Gender and Age Group of Respondents**

**Frequency of Respondent Phone Use While Driving (question 5)**

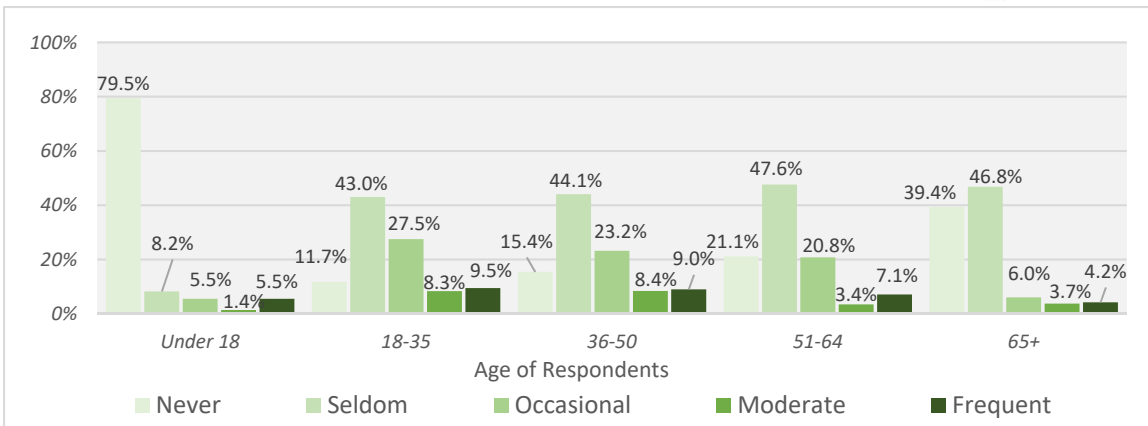
Care should be used when evaluating this question since no distinction was made between handheld vs hands-free use or the purpose of the use such as texting vs navigation.

25.1% of women and 18.6% of men indicated they never use a phone while driving, representing a 6.5% difference. At the other end, 9.1% of men and 6.2% of women indicated they frequently use a phone while driving, representing just over 3% difference. Figure 8 details responses by gender of respondent.

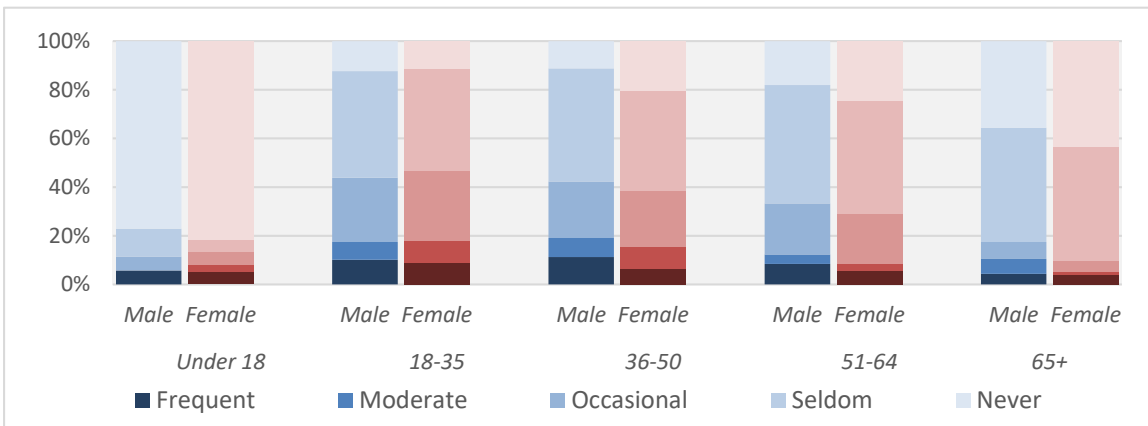


**Figure 8. Frequency of Phone Use While Driving by Gender of Respondent**

Somewhat in contrast to how serious a problem 18 and under respondents consider distracted driving, almost 80% indicate they never use a phone while driving. Respondents between ages 18 and 50 had similar usage patterns with nearly 18% of each indicating they use phones more frequently. This dropped to 10.5% for respondents age 51 to 64 and just under 8% for those 65 and older. Figure 9 provides details by age group of respondent. This is expanded to consider both gender and age in Figure 10, which compares the percentage that each age group contributes to responses for that gender. Figure 10 shows that, for ages 36 to 64, men are nearly twice as likely as women to frequently use a phone while driving.



**Figure 9. Frequency of Phone Use While Driving by Age Group of Respondent**

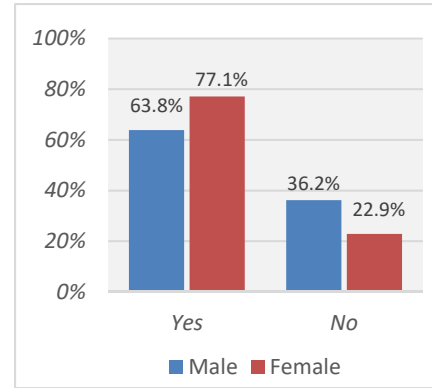


**Figure 10. Frequency of Phone Use While Driving by Gender and Age Group of Respondent**

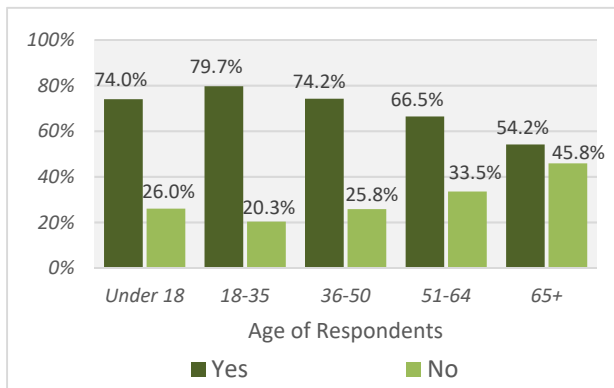
**Respondent Asked a Driver to Put Away a Phone (question 6)**

The question about the respondent asking a driver to put away a phone may provide insight into how likely an individual is to take action to address another’s behavior. 77.1% of females responded yes to this question, whereas only 63.8% of men responded yes, a 13.3% difference. Figure 11 summarizes responses by gender of respondent.

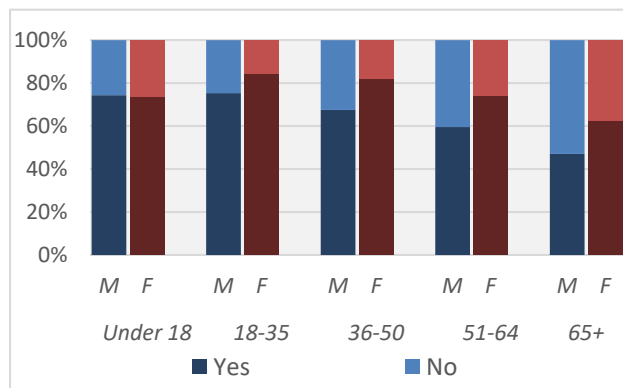
Respondents in all age groups were more likely to ask a driver to put away a phone than not, with those between the ages of 18 and 35 being most likely and those age 65 and over being least likely. Respondents under the age of 65 were generally more than twice as likely to ask. Figure 12 provides details by age group of respondent. This is expanded to consider both gender and age in Figure 13, which compares the percentage that each age group contributes to responses for that gender. For respondents under age 18, men and women were comparably split between yes and no, while for all other age groups, women were more likely to ask a driver to put away a phone. Of all age groups and genders, only men age 65 and older were more likely to not ask a driver to put away a phone.



**Figure 11. Respondent Asked Driver to Put Away Phone by Gender of Respondent**



**Figure 12. Respondent Asked Driver to Put Away Phone by Age Group of Respondent**



**Figure 13. Respondent Asked Driver to Put Away Phone by Gender and Age Group of Respondent**









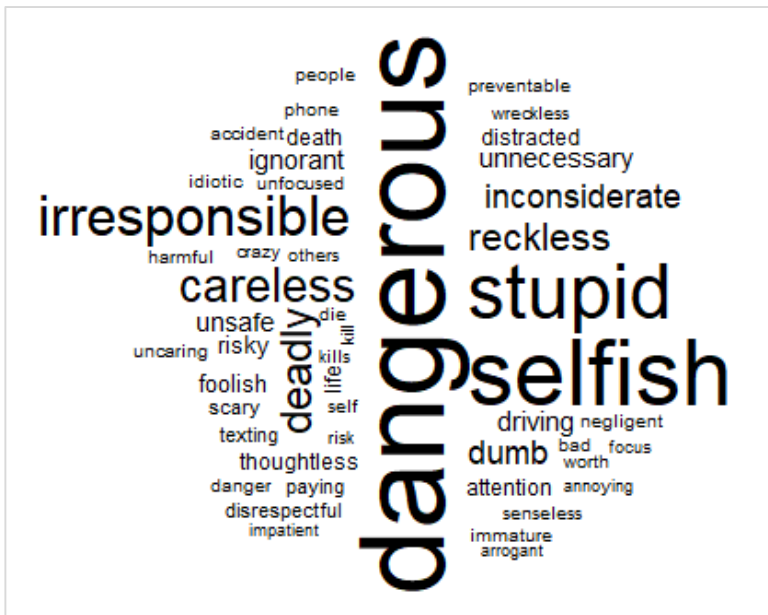


positive words provide insight into perceptions of how to encourage behavior change. That there are fewer words in the positive than the negative clouds indicates that respondents were more likely to provide pejorative suggestions.

The form of this question made it particularly difficult to evaluate since responses varied substantially. Suggestions covered the spectrum of affecting internal behavior to offering external dis-incentives or incentives, to use of technology, to enhancing education and advertisement to denying that anything will work.

**What are three words you would use to describe the act of driving distracted? (question 11)**

The most commonly used words by respondents to describe distracted driving were “dangerous”, “selfish”, “stupid”, and “irresponsible” which were representative of almost all words in the cloud. Other high-use terms included “careless”, “deadly”, “reckless”, “inconsiderate”, and “dumb”.



The single overwhelming theme is that respondents generally identified strong negative descriptors for the act of driving distracted. An interesting sub-trend was the use of three-word sentences such as “mixed up priorities” which were not captured in this assessment.

This question asked for three words but did not specify if these should be unique words, three-word phrases or three-word sentences. As a result, the form of the word cloud is a little different from other questions because of the potential for three keywords in all responses. That “dangerous” is twice the size of other words indicates the pervasiveness of this sentiment across respondents.

**Figure 19. Three Words Used to Describe the Act of Driving Distracted**